

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A method in the kernel of an operating system comprising:
  - receiving in the kernel of an operating system at least one request regarding at least one designated device of a plurality of devices from at least one application program;
  - communicating the at least one request from the kernel of the operating system to the at least one designated device via a well known communication protocol;
  - receiving in the kernel of the operating system information from the at least one designated device; and
  - forwarding the information from the kernel of the operating system to the application program that sent the request.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one designated device comprises a remote device accessible via a network.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the at least one designated device comprises a local device.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one request comprises at least one of a status request and a control request.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the communications protocol is the user datagram protocol (UDP).
6. The method of claim 1 wherein receiving the request is achieved via at least one socket.
7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
  - receiving in the kernel of the operating system a subscription request from an application program regarding at least one of the plurality of devices;

receiving in the kernel of the operating system an event from one of the plurality of devices; and

forwarding event information from the kernel of the operating system to the application program that sent the subscription request regarding the device.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein forwarding the information is achieved via a socket.
9. A system comprising:
  - a processor and a memory coupled to a bus;
  - at least one application program;
  - a communications server to pass information between the at least one application program and at least one of a plurality of devices via a communication protocol, the communications server integrated within a kernel of an operating system.
10. The system of claim 9 wherein the plurality of devices comprise at least one of:
  - a plurality of local devices; and
  - a plurality of remote devices accessible via a network.
11. The system of claim 9 wherein the communication protocol is the user datagram protocol/internet protocol (UDP/IP) such that the communication server is a user datagram protocol (UDP) server.
12. The system of claim 9 wherein the information passed from the at least one application program to the at least one device comprises at least one of a status request and a control request.
13. The system of claim 9 wherein the application program is coupled to the communication server via a socket.

14. The system of claim 9 wherein the application program is coupled to the communication server via a queue.
15. A machine readable medium having stored thereon instructions which when executed by a processor cause a machine to perform operations comprising:
- receiving in the kernel of an operating system at least one request regarding at least one designated device of a plurality of devices from at least one application program;
  - communicating the at least one request from the kernel of the operating system to the at least one designated device via a well known communication protocol;
  - receiving in the kernel of the operating system information from the at least one designated device; and
  - forwarding the information from the kernel of the operating system to the application program that sent the request.
16. The machine readable medium of claim 15 wherein the at least one designated device comprises a remote device accessible via a network.
17. The machine readable medium of claim 15 wherein the at least one designated device comprises a local device.
18. The machine readable medium of claim 15 wherein the at least one request comprises at least one of a status request and a control request.
19. The machine readable medium of claim 15 wherein the communications protocol is the user datagram protocol/internet protocol (UDP/IP).
20. The machine readable medium of claim 15 wherein receiving the request is achieved via at least one socket.
21. The machine readable medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions cause the machine to perform operations further comprising:

receiving in the kernel of the operating system a subscription request from an application program regarding at least one of the plurality of devices;

receiving in the kernel of the operating system an event from one of the plurality of devices; and

forwarding event information from the kernel of the operating system to the application program that sent the subscription request regarding the device.

22. The machine readable medium of claim 15 wherein forwarding information is achieved via a socket.

23. The machine readable medium of claim 15 wherein the operating system is the Linux operating system.